

RIGHT OF WAY THROUGH CROW INDIAN RESERVATION.

JULY 25, 1890.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. SHIVELY, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 10336.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs having had under consideration bill (H. R. 10336), "to grant to the Montana and Wyoming Railroad Company a right of way through the Crow Indian Reservation, and for other purposes," report the same favorably and recommend that it do pass after amendment by striking out lines 15, 16, 17 of Section 1, and the insertion of the following:

Also a branch line to be constructed up Bear Creek to the western line of such reservation to the coal mines of the Montana Coal and Iron Company, being a distance of about four miles, commencing at the point where the said Bear Creek empties into the said Clark's Fork.

The bill contains all the usual provisions guarding the rights and interests of the Indians. The commercial interests of the section through which the railroad is to be constructed would seem to suggest that early and favorable action should be taken by Congress.

APPENDIX.

The right of way proposed to be granted to the Montana and Wyoming Railroad Company parallels the route of the Rocky Fork Company 10 miles through the reservation from the mouth of Clark's Fork to the mouth of Rocky Fork. There it leaves the Rocky Fork and passes through the reservation to the mouth of Bear Creek, 30 miles; from the mouth of Bear Creek it runs about 4 miles through the reservation and 5 miles outside of the reservation to the mines of the Montana Coal and Iron Company.

These coal fields are said to be among the most extensive as well as the best in the Northwest, and at present there is no railroad outlet for the product. Red Lodge, the present terminus of the Rocky Fork and Cooke City Railroad, is 3 miles across the divide from the mines of the Montana Coal and Iron Company, but the difference in elevation between the two points is 1,100 feet, and it is said to be, if not impossible entirely impracticable to extend the Rocky Fork road to these mines, and competent engineers have declared that it is impossible.

One of the main purposes of the proposed road is to reach these coal mines in Park County, Mont., and then by extension to reach the extensive oil fields and rich and magnificent stock country of the Big Horn Basin in Wyoming. From the mouth of Bear Creek it is proposed to extend the road up Clark's Fork to Cooke City, a distance of about 9 miles only, through the reservation, but in all to Cooke City a distance of 51 miles.

Whether or not the Rocky Fork and Cooke City corporation is still entitled under the act granting them the right of way to continue their road from Red Lodge to Cooke City "by the most practicable route," as stated in their bill, it does not seem likely that that road will ever be completed further, for between that point and Cooke

City are impassable mountains, the lowest elevation of which is over 10,000 feet, the only pass over them being the Clark's Fork Cañon, connection between which and Red Ledge is impracticable if not impossible on account of the rough character of the intermediate country.

The Rocky Fork company has had a survey made from Red Lodge around the mountain to Cooke City by Mr. Bundock, an engineer in their employ, who is said to have reported the idea of building on the line utterly impossible.

In behalf, therefore, of the Montana and Wyoming road a right of way is asked through the Crow Indian Reservation, which will serve to furnish facilities for an output of the extensive coal deposit of the mines of the Montana Coal and Iron Company, and to provide facilities for putting on the market the valuable products of the rich country around Cooke City, for which there is at present no economical means of transportation. The valuable character of the mines in this region and the difficulty and expense of transporting their products to market have been so often called to the attention of Congress that a repetition of such statements is useless.

The rights of the Indians are carefully guarded in the proposed measure, and by the most recent surveys Clark's Fork Cañon, through which it is proposed to run, is entirely outside of the present boundaries of the National Park and the boundaries as proposed by the bill which has passed the Senate and is now before the House for its action.